

Opening Song: 184 - Jesus Paid It All

A PARTY FOR A PROSTITUTE

It was one of the most extraordinary birthday parties ever held. Not it wasn't in a plush ballroom of a grand hotel. No there weren't famous celebrities, nor anyone rich or powerful. It was held at 3am in a small seedy cafe in Honolulu, the guest of honour was a prostitute, the fellow guests were prostitutes, and the man who threw it was a Christian minister!

The idea came to Christian minister Tony Campolo very early one morning as he sat in the cafe. He was drinking coffee at the counter, when a group of prostitutes walked in and took up the stools around him. One of the girls, Agnes, lamented the fact that not only was it her birthday tomorrow but that she'd never had a birthday party.

Tony thought it would be a great idea to surprise Agnes with a birthday party. Learning from the cafe owner, a guy named Harry, that the girls came in every morning around 3.30am Tony agreed with him to set the place up for a party. Word somehow got out on the street, so that by 3.15 the next morning the place was packed with prostitutes, the cafe owner and his wife, and Tony.

When Agnes walked in she saw streamers, balloons, Harry holding a birthday cake, and everyone screaming out "Happy Birthday!" Agnes was overwhelmed. The tears poured down her face as the crowd sang Happy Birthday. When Harry called on her to cut the cake she paused. She'd never had a birthday cake and wondered if she could take it home to show her mother. When Agnes left, there was a stunned silence. Tony did what a Christian minister should. He led Harry, Harry's wife and a roomful of prostitutes in a prayer for Agnes.

It was a birthday party rarely seen in Honolulu – thrown by a Christian minister for a 39-year-old prostitute who had never had anyone go out of their way to do something like this and who expected nothing in return. Indeed, so surprising was this turn of events that the cafe owner found it hard to believe there were churches that would do this sort of thing, but if there were then that's the sort of church he'd be prepared to join.

- Title of Sermon
 - COMPASSION
- Turn you Bible
 - Matt 9:36

- Previously in chapter
 - Lots of healings
 - Gets a huge following

Matthew 9:35–38 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

- As Jesus is traveling
- He does few things
 - Teaching
 - Proclaiming the gospel
 - Healing
 - every disease and every affliction
- You can imagine
 - Famous
- Free healthcare
 - Lines of people
- People came in masses
- After this one he feeds the 5000
 - Lots of people
 - Jesus gets little rest
- This is why
 - Jesus would say
 - Don’t tell anyone
 - Crowds were overwhelming
 - Jesus could not say NO...

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

- When He saw them
 - He had compassion
- **COMPASSION**
 - **Σπλαγχνίζομαι**
 - **(splugchnizomai)**
 - Have pity
 - Feel sympathy
 - Have compassion

to be deeply moved v. — to be affected deeply in one's inner being, especially in that aspect characterized by sympathy and compassion.

- Literally,
 - To be deeply moved
 - In the inward parts
 - (in the bowels)
- Have you ever
 - Felt such love
 - It hurt
 - On the inside
- Have you ever
 - Witness such pain
 - Your stomach turned
- Have you ever
 - Heard terrible story
 - Lost your appetite?
- This is the meaning.
 - Gut wrenching
 - Compassion
- Demanding action...

Helping Homeless People

- Jesus sees the crowds
 - He is driven to help
- He is willing to lose
 - Sleep
 - Money
 - Energy
 - Time
 - Vitality
 - To help them
- He can't do otherwise!
 - Why?
- The way Jesus sees:

“because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
- He sees them as,
 - Lost without Him.
 - Helpless
 - Hopeless

- Desperate
- What happens to
 - Sheep without shepherd?
 - Lost
 - Confused
 - Hungry
 - Thirsty
 - Lonely
 - Prey

Sheep Jump Off Cliff

In 2005 In Turkey, A Suicide Sheep Jumped Off A Cliff And 1500 Sheep Followed The First One.

- Jesus helped
 - The undeserving
- Loved the
 - Unlovable

10 Lepers

- As Jesus
 - Sees huge crowd
 - Moved with compassion
 - He says,
 - To disciples

Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

- Often times,
- We say the opposite
- There are few
- Only getting a little
- Not having success
- Small harvest
- Why?
- Why do we have
- Different results than Jesus?
- Jesus says,
- Time to harvest!
- What does Jesus see
- That we don’t?
- Affirm Church

- compassion ministry.
- Why Bad Harvest
- According to Jesus?
- Too early
- NO!

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...”

- Jesus solution NOT
 - Get better seed
 - More fertilizer
 - More water
 - More sun
 - More warmth
 - Longer season
 - Pesticides
 - Herbicides
 - Humidity
- Problem is
 - Workers!
- Why are the
 - workers few?
 - Not enough?
- We are missing
 - What Jesus has...
 - COMPASSION!
- We are jaded.
 - We have been used
 - We are too preoccupied
 - We are too judgmental
 - We don't think they are ripe

Helping Homeless

- I'm proud
 - this church is
 - seeking difference.
 - If we want
 - be like Christ
 - Love
 - Pity
 - Concern
 - Empathy
 - Sympathy
 - Understanding

- Care
- Gut wrenching
 - Bowel moving
 - COMPASSION
- To Love like Jesus.
 - love for unlovable.
- In fact,
 - Jesus says
 - describes save
 - these words:

Matthew 25:33-36 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

- Now What?
 - Quit?
 - Go home?
 - Guilt trip?
 - No
- Passage gives answer

Matthew 9:38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

- Christ's solution:
 - Pray
 - Bold prayer
 - Earnest prayer
 - Sincere prayer
 - Like your life depends on it
- Aorist Imperative
 - Start praying
 - Start running
 - Start asking

"Start praying earnestly. You're not yet praying as you should. Instead, you need to start pleading with the Lord of the harvest." – Derek Morris

- Why should we beg
 - God to do
 - Something he already wants?

- It is not
 - For God
- It is
 - For us.
- Deep Prayer
- Earnest Prayer
 - is
- transformative prayer
- It changes
 - my jaded heart.
- It behooves us
 - to seek that
 - prayer life.

"There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.

" *Steps to Christ*, 98

- Seek out prayer circles
 - like this.
- Another interesting word

Matthew 9:38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

- Interesting word:
 - “send out”
- Two ways to say
 - “send out”
- Common way:
 - Apostolos
- This word:
 - ἐκβάλλω
 - Thrown Out
 - Cast out

to cast out— to throw something away from a place or enclosed location.

- Very strong word
 - Other locations
 - Cast out demons
- Very serious prayer
 - Earnest prayer

"Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg You to throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with me."

- Give us compassion
 - Like Jesus

THE LAST CAB RIDE

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. One night I took a fare at 2:30 AM, when I arrived to collect, the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once.

But I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself.

So I walked to the door and knocked. 'Just a minute', answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor.

After a long pause, the door opened.

A small woman in her 80's stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie.

By her side was a small nylon suitcase The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets.

There were no clocks on the walls, no knick-knacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and

glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman.

She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb.

She kept thanking me for my kindness. "It's nothing", I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated."

"Oh, you're such a good man," she said. When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, and then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice."

I looked in the rear-view mirror. Her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

"What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator.

We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl.

Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her.

I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse. "Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered. "Oh, there are other passengers," I responded.

Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly. Our hug ended with her remark, "You gave an old woman a little moment of joy." After a slight pause, she added, "Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, and then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven

away? On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life.

We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware, beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

- Appeal??